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Ivan's PR cup runneth over!

JOHN LOFTON

**Memo To: General Secretary
Mikhail Gorbachev.
From: Ivan Ivanovich, Chief,
KGB Disinformation
Division.
Subject: Operation Silk Purse.**

Our desire to see you portrayed in the Western media in — what shall we say? — the proper light, is succeeding beyond our wildest imaginings.

Even I could not believe what I saw April 8 on the "CBS Morning News." One of those interviewed by anchorman Bill Kurtis to comment on your proposal to halt the deployment of our medium-range nuclear missiles was Vladimir Alekseyev. Yes, Comrade Alekseyev from our *Novosti*, which — get this — Mr. Kurtis called a Soviet "news agency."

One would have thought that Mr. Kurtis, or some of his superiors, would have been familiar with the book *Dezinformatsia: Active Measures in Soviet Society*, by Richard Shultz and Roy Godson, in which *Novosti* is said to have its activities "coordinated by the Kremlin," and which states that a "sometimes quite large" percent of its personnel are KGB officers. But this does not seem to be the case.

Anyway, and again I stress this is hard to believe but I saw it with my own eyes, Mr. Kurtis asked Comrade Alekseyev — who was on live from Moscow — what he thought of your disarmament idea? Well, with a straight face and sounding very authoritative, Comrade Alekseyev said: "I think it is a very worthwhile proposal if the United States takes it seriously. Unfortunately, the first reaction we've heard from the U.S. is not one of enthusiasm. But, I think if the proposal is studied, we can move toward the goal of reducing nuclear weapons."

Comrade Alekseyev went on to say that there are "no grounds whatsoever" for the repeated assertion that we are ahead in the area of armaments where you suggest a freeze. And, in two subsequent news breaks on the half-hour, CBS showed excerpts from Comrade Alekseyev's interview!

Needless to say, this kind of "news" is crucial to our propaganda campaign. It is an important time period on the U.S. media we could

not buy, even if we tried. And, above all else, this time is free!

And this is not all. On this same CBS program, a "Soviet expert," Mr. Jonathan Sanders of Columbia University — a man our beloved Lenin would have called a "useful idiot" — said that your missile-freeze idea was "a gesture" showing that we "want to create a spirit of getting things going at Geneva," that we are "willing to compromise" and put arms control "on the front burner."

We were all horrified, of course, by the prospect that Mr. Kurtis might ask Mr. Sanders why, if this was so, you didn't make your proposal, in private, at Geneva. But, fortunately for us, this thought did not occur to Mr. Kurtis.

Mr. Sanders went on to say that you were "clever" to make your proposal on a slow news day, an Easter Sunday, and that we are "getting quite good" at getting the attention of the Western media. To which a beaming Mr. Kurtis replied: "They are, aren't they?" Mr. Sanders also implied that we have an advantage because we want to stop Star Wars, reduce weapons in Europe — and we want to do these things "as soon as possible," whereas the U.S. schedule seems more long-term than ours.

Marvelous!

And in the Western print media we are doing just as well, if not better. On April 9, a *New York Times* story by Hedrick Smith was headlined: "Gorbachev on Stage." And a smaller headline said: "In Political Theater, Soviet Leader Seems To Challenge Reagan as the Communicator." Among other things, this story noted that, for some, your missile proposal "was a signal that President Reagan no longer had the almost automatic advantage in personal and public relations that he has had over three ailing Soviet leaders whose infirmities undercut their force on the world stage."

Imagine! Only a few weeks in office, and already in *The New York*

Times — the paper whose motto brags that it publishes only the news that is fit to print — you are being compared to "the Great Communi-

cator" himself, Ronald Reagan! Truly this is an historic event!

All of this recent favorable publicity, I am happy to report, comes after the original tidal wave of good news — certainly good from our viewpoint — that greeted your well-deserved ascendancy to our country's highest office. In all honesty, who would have predicted at that time — in light of our 68th straight year of bad weather — that ABC's Mike Lee in London would actually say that you had earned your political fame by your efforts "to reform Soviet agriculture?"

And even those of us who love and revere you, almost fell off our chairs when we saw, of all people, a Conservative member of the British Parliament, John Browne, say, on ABC, that you have above all other things "Western-style charisma" and that you and your charming wife have the potential to be our equivalent of the U.S. President John F. Kennedy and his wife.

And on this same night, also on ABC, even the notorious anti-Soviet slanderer George Will, when asked if there was any reason to be alarmed about you, said, "No, I think not" because the fact is that you did

not come up "the hard way," that you did not benefit, like Mr. Khrushchev, from what Mr. Will called "the horrible savagery of Stalin's purges."

Referring to you as "this gentlemen," Mr. Will did note, however, that you had risen to the top during the "extremely brutal" period of foreign policy — roughly from 1968 through Afghanistan. But, believe me, from Mr. Will, this kind of talk, on balance, is a definite plus.

Meanwhile, on this same evening, in reporting your becoming our leader, on NBC, a Mr. Steve Hurst, from Moscow, said that your coming to power meant "the West can probably expect a less confrontational Soviet Union." And that under your leadership, "the Soviet Union could well be a markedly different, perhaps safer place," when you leave office.

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Also on this same program, NBC's man at the White House, Chris Wallace, was shown saying that while President Reagan went to our embassy in Washington to express his sympathy over the death of Comrade Chernenko, there was "nothing softhearted" about Mr. Reagan's actions that day. Mr. Reagan was then shown at the White House doing what Mr. Wallace said was "attacking" the Soviet Union — telling a group of journal-

ists that there is a "mutual suspicion" between our two countries, but "I think that ours is more justified than theirs."

This statement, for Mr. Reagan, is, of course, a mild one. But we are delighted that Mr. Wallace chose to characterize what the president said as an "attack" on our country.

On this same NBC program, former British government official Denis Healey — who was a Marxist as an undergraduate in college and a member of the executive of the socialist Fabian Society from 1954 to 1961 — said that you are "an

extraordinarily sensitive man" whose face "reflects every mood like a breeze going across a pond." And that you talk like "a Western intellectual poet."

In addition, an Iowa farmer who, it was said, is one of the few Americans to have spent some time with you, was shown saying that you are "competent, capable, and friendly," and: "I really quite liked him."

And this program concluded with NBC's reporter, John Cochran, who was in Geneva, saying that Westerners who have met you believe that you are "flexible," and this is why these same Westerners are "relieved" that you have won the top job.

So, like I said, our desire to see you portrayed in the Western media in the proper light, is succeeding beyond our wildest imaginings — which is extraordinary. Because, as you know, some of our imaginings are quite wild indeed. But even so, we, admittedly, would not have had the gall even to attempt to peddle what some in the Western media are reporting about you voluntarily.

Praise be to Lenin that we are not having to pay for all the free, favorable press you are receiving, Comrade General Secretary! Or our economy would be in even worse shape than it is!